

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Judith Gap FTTP Upgrade Project  
**Proposed Implementation Date:** Summer 2017  
**Proponent:** Triangle Communications  
**Location:** 11N 15E Sec. 36  
11N 16E Sec. 20  
11N 17E Sec. 16 & 36  
**County:** Wheatland & Fergus  
**Trust:** Common Schools

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Triangle Communications has requested an easement strip 20 feet wide, 10 feet on each side of the centerline through above said tracts to install and maintain an underground telecommunication cable.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

*Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.*

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Northeastern Land Office (NELO), Carol Gaugler (lessee), E L Peterson Ranch (lessee) Robert E Lee Ranch Co (lessee), and James Glennie (lessee) are all involved with this project.

#### 2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The DNRC, and NELO have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all required permits for the proposed project. The proponent is responsible for settling all surface damages with the surface owners.

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Alternative A (No Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant an easement for an underground telecommunication cable.

**Alternative B (the Proposed Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department does grant an easement for an underground telecommunication cable.

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

#### 4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Off road erosion hazard as determined by the NRCS has rated all soils, except for one, in the area of potential affect as slight with the other soil being rated moderate. Areas of high erosion potential will be mitigated with straw waddles and mulch.

##### Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail)

Aggregation Method: Dominant Condition  
Tie-break Rule: Higher

Wheatland County Area, Montana  
Survey Area Version and Date: 11 - 12/31/2013

Map symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Component name and % composition Rating reasons
35B	Delpoint-Yamacall-Bullhook loams, 2 to 4 percent slopes.	Slight	Judith 85% Windham 5% Ulrica 5% Quigley 5%
652C	Sagedale-Midnot complex, 0 to 8 percent slopes		
687B	Judith gravelly loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes		
692B	Whitecow-Yapple complex, 0 to 4 percent slopes		
693B	Yapple-Ashuelot-Whitecow complex, 0 to 4 percent slopes	Slight	Judith 85% Windham 5% Ulrica 5% Quigley 5%
694E	Whitecow gravelly loam, 8 to 35 percent slopes		
699B	Judith-Whitecow complex, 0 to 4 percent slopes		
NOTCOM	No Digital Data Available		

##### Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail)

Aggregation Method: Dominant Condition  
Tie-break Rule: Higher

Fergus County, Montana  
Survey Area Version and Date: 15 - 09/11/2014

Map symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Component name and % composition Rating reasons
20	Amor-Cabba loams, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Amor 60% Cabba 30% Doney 5% Farnuf 5%
54	Daglum-Adger complex, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Daglum 50% Adger 30% Gerber 10% Nobe 10%
67	Doney-Wayden complex, 15 to 60 percent slopes	Severe	Doney 40% Slope/erodibility Wayden 25% Slope/erodibility Cabba 9% Slope/erodibility
69	Doney-Windham complex, 15 to 45 percent slopes	Moderate	Doney 50% Slope/erodibility Windham 30% Slope/erodibility Tally 5% Slope/erodibility Vebar 5% Slope/erodibility
70	Doney-Winifred-Wayden complex, 15 to 45 percent slopes	Moderate	Doney 35% Slope/erodibility Winifred 30% Slope/erodibility Amor 8% Slope/erodibility Cabba 7% Slope/erodibility
198	Savage silty clay loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Savage 90% Savage 5% Regent 5%
254	Vebar fine sandy loam, 4 to 15 percent slopes	Slight	Vebar 90%
270	Winifred clay loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Winifred 90% Linwell 5% Judith 5%

No cumulative effects to geology and soil quality, stability and moisture are anticipated.

**5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:**

*Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.*

No important ground or surface water will be impacted by the proposed project.

No cumulative effects to the water resources are anticipated.

**6. AIR QUALITY:**

*What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.*

The air quality in the area will not be affected.

No cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated.

**7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:**

*What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.*

The proposed easement route would run through hay land and native rangeland. The disturbed area will be limited to the trenching/ripping area. Revegetation is expected to return within two growing seasons to the disturbed area.

Noxious weeds are known to be in the area from the previous lease evaluations and disturbed sites will be monitored for noxious weeds and treated until eradicated

No rare plants or cover types are present.

No long term cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

[http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mt/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs144p2\\_05773](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mt/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs144p2_05773)

**8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:**

*Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.*

No cumulative effects are anticipated.

**9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:**

*Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.*

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program for Species of Concern with a state rank of 2 or higher was conducted. (State rank of 2 means species at risk because of very limited and/or potentially declining population numbers, range and/or habitat, making it vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.)

No species of concern were listed in the area of potential effect.

There are no wetlands in the project area.

There are no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources on this site.

No cumulative effects to habitat are anticipated.

**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

Class III cultural and paleontological resource inventories have been conducted of the area of potential effect on state land. Despite a detailed examination, no cultural or fossil resources were identified and no additional archaeological or paleontological investigative work is recommended. The proposed project will have *No Effect to Antiquities* as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act. Formal reports of findings were prepared and are on file with the DNRC and the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer.

No cumulative effects to historical and archaeological sites are anticipated.

**11. AESTHETICS:**

*Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.*

No direct or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated.

**12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:**

*Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.*

No demands on limited resources are required for this project.

No direct or cumulative effects to environmental resources are anticipated.

**13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:**

*List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed in this EA Checklist.

**IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION**

- *RESOURCES* potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain *POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS* following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

There will be some health and safety concerns associated with the operation of heavy equipment. The proponent and their employees are aware of any health and safety hazards and accept them as occupational hazards.

Once the installation has been completed, there will be no health and safety concerns associated with this project.

**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

*Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.*

This project will not add to or deter from other industrial, agricultural, or commercial activities in this area.

**16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:**

*Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.*

The project will not create any new jobs. These positions are already held by employees of the proponent.

No cumulative effects to the employment market are anticipated.

**17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:**

*Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.*

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

**18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:**

*Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services*

There will not be any increases in traffic or traffic patterns if this project is approved.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on government services.

**19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:**

*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting this project.

**20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:**

*Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.*

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on recreation or wilderness activities.

**21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:**

*Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing*

The proposed project does not include any changes to housing or developments. Population and housing will not be affected.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

The proposed project will have no effect on any unique quality of the area.

**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**

*Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.*

The proposed project will not have any cumulative economic or social effect.

**EA Checklist**

**Name:** Brandon Sandau

Prepared By: Title: Land Use Specialist

Signature:



Date: March 28, 2017

## V. FINDING

### 25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the Proposed Alternative B, and recommend the proponent be granted an easement for a buried telecommunication cable in the above locations, as surveyed in the application.

### 26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined that no negative long-term environmental impacts will result from the proposed activity.

### 27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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EIS

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More Detailed EA

**XXX**

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist  
Approved By:

Name: Barny D. Smith

Title: Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office

Signature:



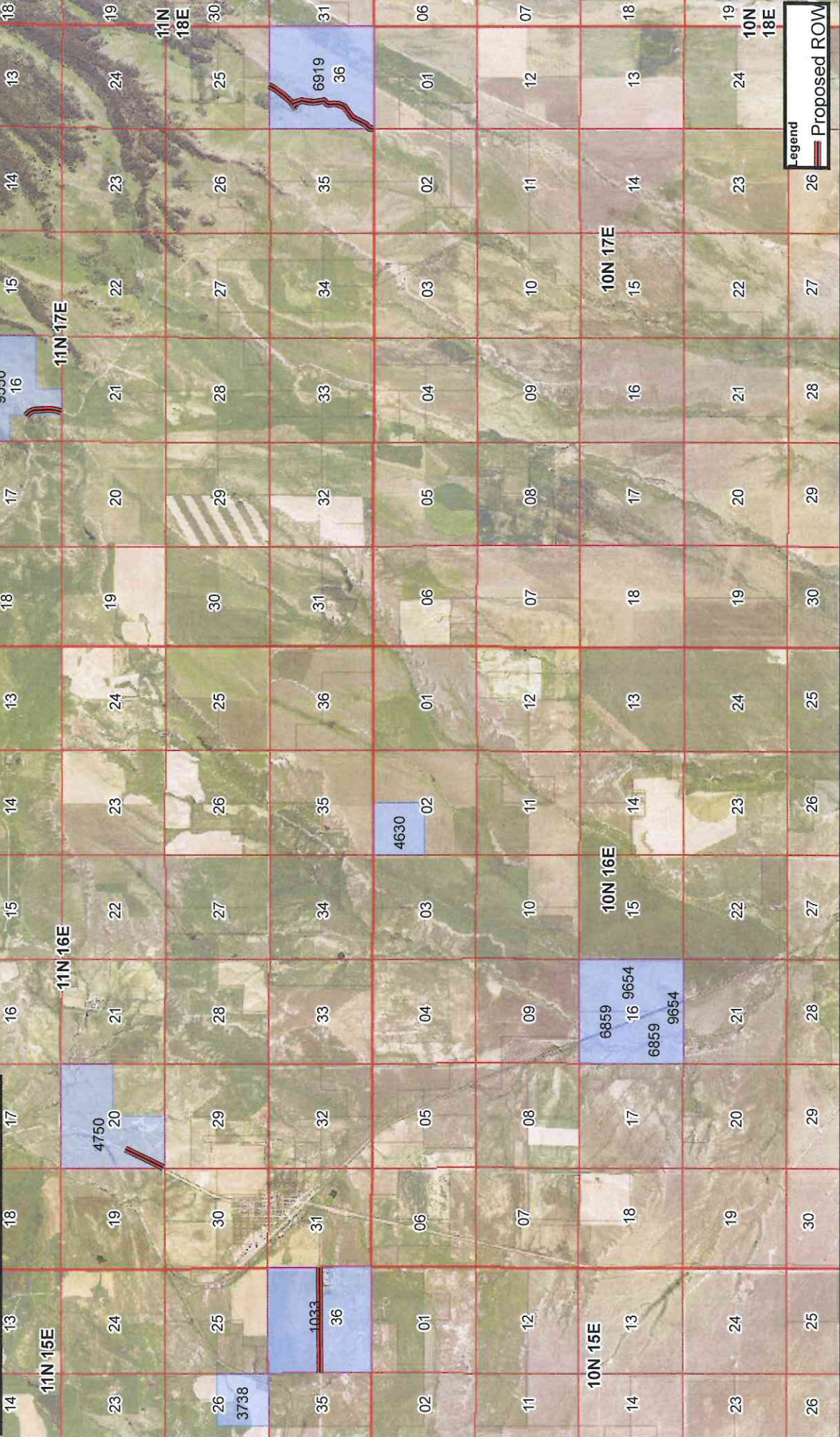
Date: March 28, 2017



# Triangle Communication Proposed ROW



Author: Brandon Sandhu



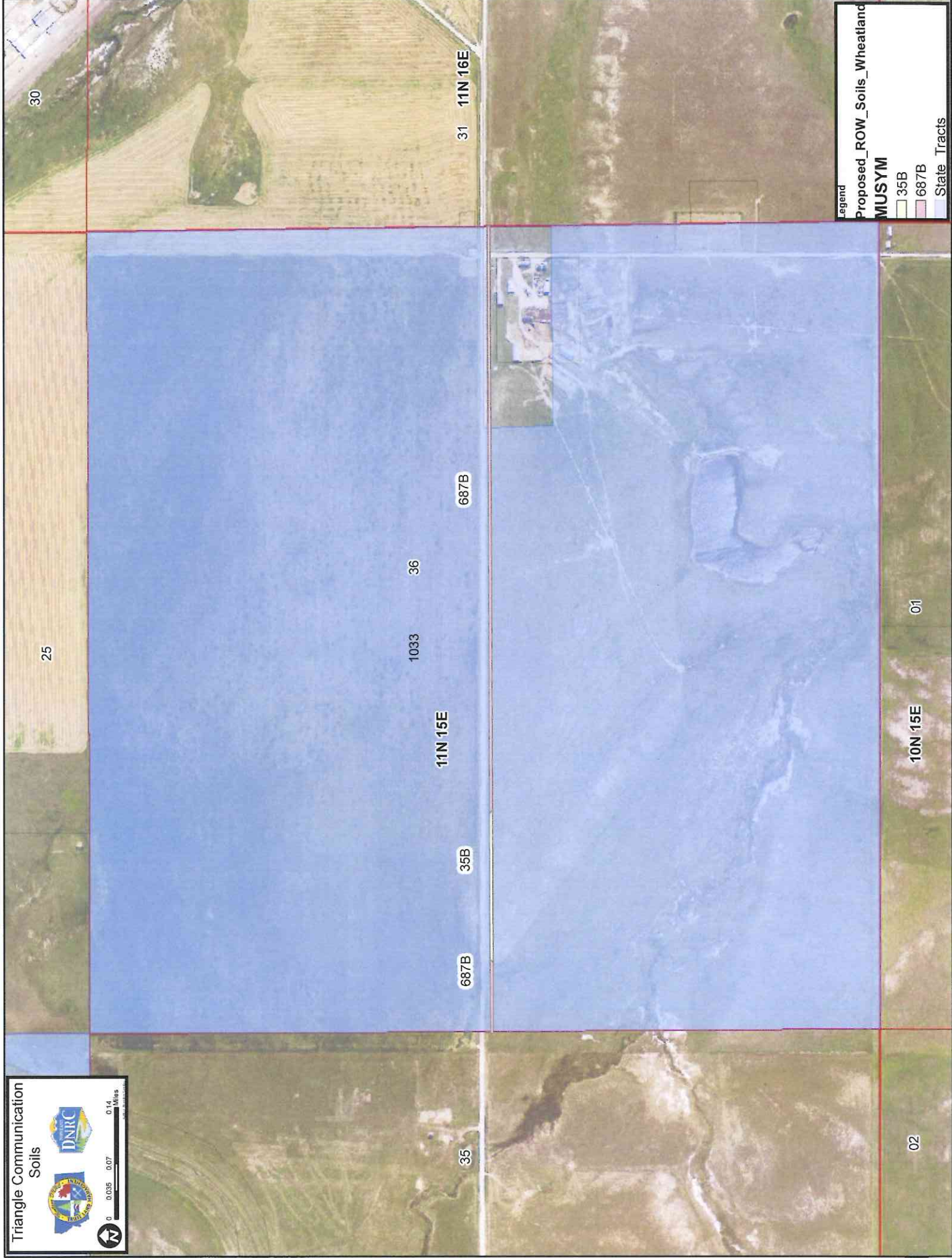
Legend  
Proposed ROW



Triangle Communication  
Soils



0 0.035 0.07 0.14 Miles

Legend

Proposed\_ROW\_Soils\_Wheatland

**MUSYM**

- 35B
- 687B
- State Tracts

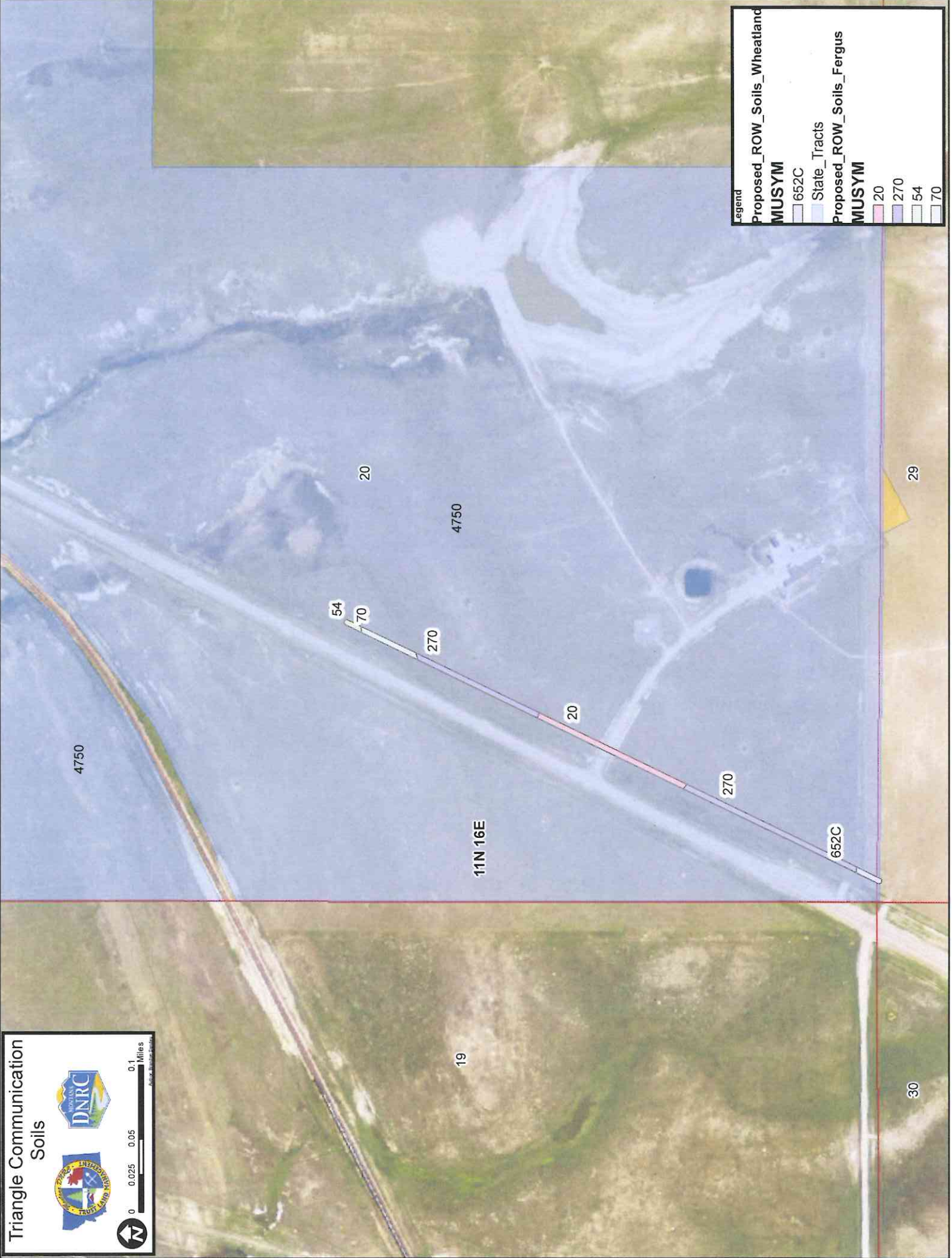


Triangle Communication  
Soils



0 0.025 0.05 0.1 Miles

North Arrow



Legend

Proposed ROW Soils\_Wheatland

MUSYM

652C

State\_Tracts

Proposed ROW Soils\_Fergus

MUSYM

20

270

54

70



Triangle Communication  
Soils

0 0.02 0.04 0.08 Miles  
North Arrow



Legend

State\_Tracts

Proposed\_ROW\_Soils\_Ferguson MUSYM

198	254	67	69
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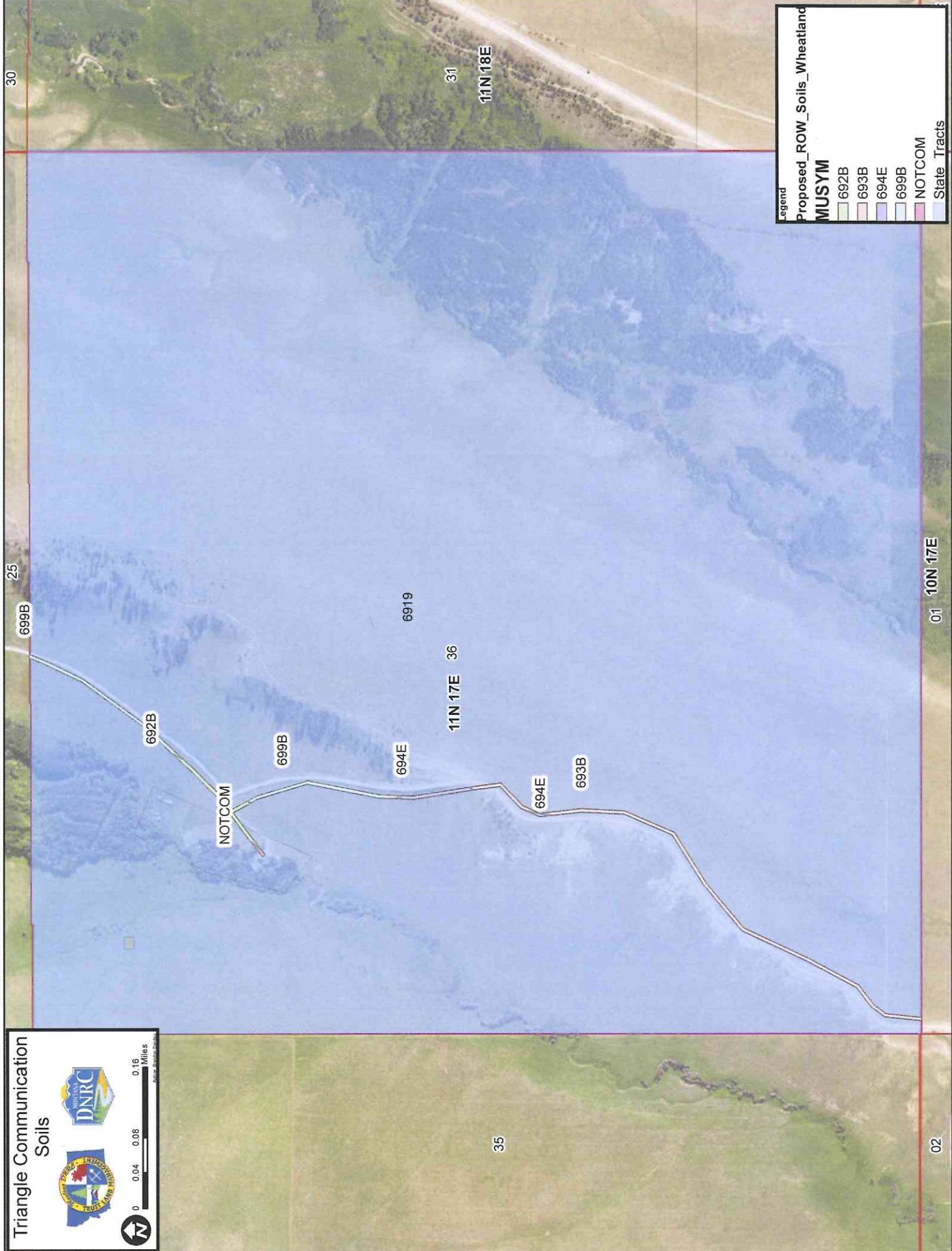
Triangle Communication  
Soils





0 0.04 0.08 0.16  
Miles

Source: ESRI, DeLorme, Garmin, etc.



Legend

Proposed\_ROW\_Soils\_Wheatland

**MUSYM**

- 692B
- 693B
- 694E
- 699B
- NOTCOM
- State Tracts